

The AMERICAN OBSERVER

A free, virtuous and enlightened people must know well the great principles and causes on which their happiness depends. — James Monroe



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World Keeps Peace in Troubled Months

Survey of Events Since September Emphasizes Success in Overcoming War Threats

BUT UNFAVORABLE SIGNS NOTED

Arms Race and Growth of Rivalry Imperil Security of Nations

As the school year draws to a close it may be useful to attempt a brief survey of the international scene and take note of the principal changes which have occurred during the last nine months. The weeks which have sped by since the beginning of September have been more than usually crowded with events. War scares, assassinations, governmental upsets, and diplomatic conferences, we have had in abundance. It would be impossible to review everything that has happened, even hurriedly, in the space of a single article. But it is not so essential that numerous details be recalled to mind at this time. It is of more value to take account of the big facts, the major changes, which have been brought to light, for they, after all, are the guideposts by which we trace the course of world history.

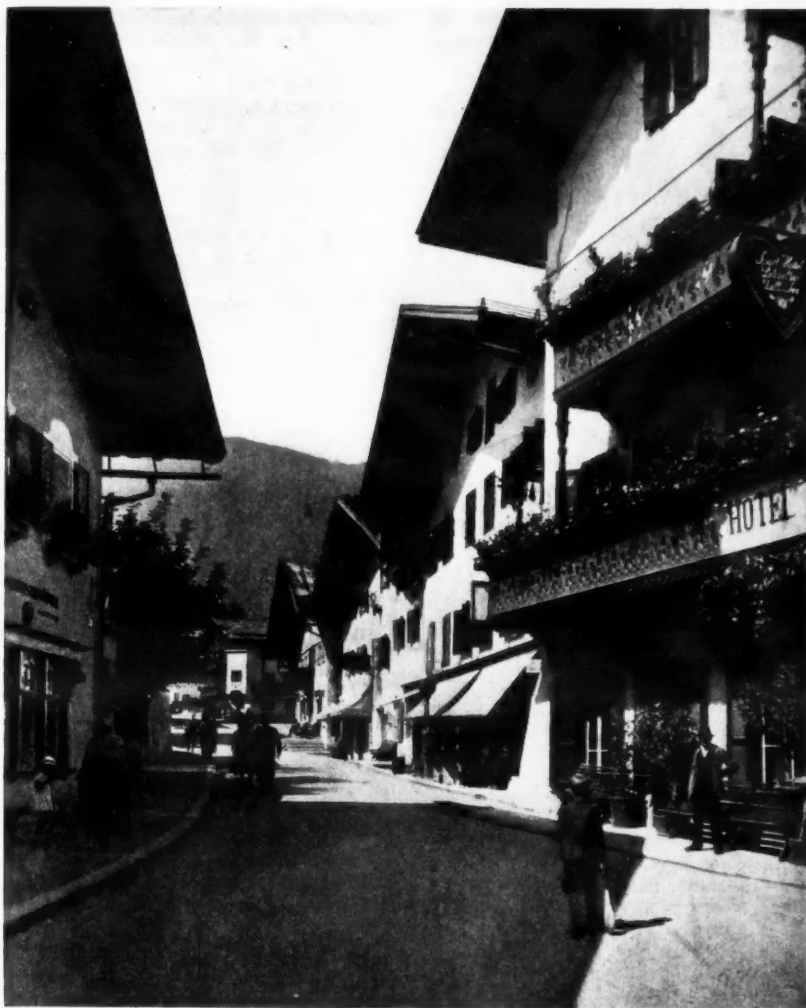
Peace Maintained

What, then, are the things which we should remember about the period within our scope? Perhaps the first is that the nations have muddled through months of frequent crisis without blundering into war. On more than one occasion it seemed as if various countries would be unable to solve their disputes peacefully and would resort to armed conflict. Political observers predicted the coming of a new war at every turn. For example, in October King Alexander of Yugoslavia and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou were assassinated in Marseilles. The murderer and his accomplices were traced to Hungarian soil and the Yugoslavs were prompt to implicate the Hungarian government in the incident. The resulting antagonism between the two nations reached such an intensity that it required every resource of the large powers, acting through the League of Nations, to prevent an outbreak which, had it occurred, might easily have spread over the entire European continent.

The League of Nations proved its value in this instance. For years the League has been berated as an organization incapable of maintaining peace. But there is no doubt that the nations of Europe were glad to have Geneva at their disposal when the crisis between Hungary and Yugoslavia broke. By the use of League machinery it was possible to soothe the ruffled tempers and an acceptable adjustment of the controversy was effected.

War talk bristled on several other occasions. Last fall Russia and Japan rattled swords at each other as they quarreled over a selling price for the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchoukuo. Again the "inevitable" Russo-Japanese war was heralded. But eventually the two powers tired of barking at each other and Russia sold the road to Japan. Since then relations between the two countries have improved perceptibly. The Far East is calmer than it has been for some years.

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A MOUNTAIN VILLAGE IN AUSTRIA

© Ewing Galloway

Austria is now looked upon as the foremost danger spot in Europe.

Are You Immune?

For several weeks the postal service of the nation has been placed under a heavy strain. A new burden has been put upon it. Carriers everywhere are weighted down with chain letters, as a strange new fad has established itself throughout the land. Everyone, it seems, is sending these letters. The sender mails lists of these names to a number of persons. Everyone receiving the letter is supposed to send a dime to the name at the top of the list. That name is then to be struck off and the list is to be sent on its way again with the receiver adding his name at the bottom of the list. In this way dimes are kept in circulation. If a chain is unbroken, those early in the game will receive a good many dimes. Many others are sending dimes without receiving. It is a fairly simple chain-letter device. It seems unbelievable, at first thought, that the idea should spread through the country like wildfire and that it should have occupied the attention of millions of people. But it is not so strange after all, taking into account the psychology of human beings. This craze is kept going because it appeals to two very strong and widely distributed impulses. It gives people an opportunity to imitate and nearly everyone is imitative. In the second place, it holds out a promise of financial gain and the gambling impulse is strong and widespread.

There are individuals, of course, who do not have to resort very much to imitation in order to find relief from boredom. They have their own interests. But others, being less creative and original, fall easy victims to boredom. They cast about for every possible opportunity to dispel the tedium of the day. They find that someone is doing some kind of new thing. The first impulse is to jump in and do that thing themselves.

If this tendency to imitate resulted only in the sending of chain letters, in a brief craze for miniature golf, for crossword puzzles, or for superficial conversation about technocracy, no harm would be done. These crazes are comparatively innocent. The trouble is that political attitudes, whether sensible and logical or not, are similarly contagious. An idea sweeps across the country like prairie fire. It is taken up by thousands or millions who have no facts upon which to base their conclusions. War fevers spread in this way until they plunge nations into war and consume populations. Race and religious hatreds are scattered by the same force. It is highly important, therefore, that every individual who has the power to think and act independently should free himself from the influence of the manias and crazes and waves of emotion which sweep over the land, rendering populations temporarily the willing tools of demagogues.

New Deal Hits Snag From Two Quarters

Supreme Court's Adverse Ruling and Congressional Recalcitrance Main Obstacles

BONUS RAISES INFLATION ISSUE

Roosevelt, However, Determined to Push Principal Features of Program Through

For weeks, the administration leaders in the Senate and the House of Representatives have been pushing the President's ambitious legislative program. Their progress has been slow. Only one of the really big administration measures has been enacted into law. That is the great works-relief bill which places at the disposal of the President nearly five billion dollars to use in giving work to the unemployed and in stimulating industry. Among the other bills which the President is trying to push through Congress four stand out prominently. These are bills to extend the life of the NRA, to adopt a social security program calling for old-age pensions and unemployment insurance, to regulate holding companies drastically, and to give the federal government increased control over the banks and over the nation's credit policy.

Two Disturbing Influences

While progress toward the enactment of these measures has been slow it has been, on the whole, satisfactory. It has seemed that the administration has had the legislative situation fairly well in hand. But now, during the last two weeks, two disturbing influences have made themselves felt. Two developments have shaken rather seriously the plans of the administration. One of these developments is a Supreme Court decision which indicates that future decisions of the Court may throw out as unconstitutional a large part of the New Deal. The other development is the passage by both the Senate and the House of a bonus bill which calls for the payment to veterans of about two billion dollars, the payment being made in paper money printed by the government. This measure, seriously opposed by the administration, carries with it a threat of inflation and produces alarm in administration circles.

The decision of the Supreme Court in the railway pension case is very disquieting. On several important decisions during the last year the Court has divided five to four, with the liberals in a majority, the five liberals being Chief Justice Hughes and Justices Brandeis, Stone, Cardozo, and Roberts. These liberals have been inclined to declare New Deal legislation constitutional. They have stood for wide powers for Congress, and in doubtful cases have appeared to agree with Congress and the President in holding acts of Congress to be constitutional. Justices Van Devanter, McReynolds, and Butler have held to the conservative or strict-constructive view. They have held closely to the letter of the law, and in doubtful cases have been inclined to deny to Congress powers which Congress had asserted in enacting laws and which the President had sanctioned by signing the bills. So long as this line-up was continued the New Deal was safe enough, for it had

(Concluded on page 6)



WHEN the Federal Relief Administration sent out its checks to the states to help them furnish relief for the month of May, Illinois was left out. Harry L. Hopkins, FERA administrator, told the Illinois legislature it would have to raise \$3,000,000 a month in taxes to help care for the unemployed on relief in that state. Unless the state contributes its share, the federal government must, under the law, refuse to advance any relief funds. But the Republican members of the Illinois legislature have blocked Governor Horner's proposed bill to increase the sales tax for relief purposes. They argue that there has been too much waste in the relief administration.

As matters stand, 1,200,000 people in Illinois who have been depending on the government for support find themselves facing extreme hardship. About 500 of them marched on the state capitol to de-



© Acme
THE BIG THREE OF RELIEF
Harry L. Hopkins, Frank C. Walker, and Harold L. Ickes, who have been placed in charge of the works-relief program.

mand relief, and also to protest against the sales tax as a method of raising revenue. Governor Horner bluntly declared that "violence might be expected." Mr. Hopkins then made a temporary concession by furnishing funds enough for one week's relief. What will happen when this is spent depends on the legislature of Illinois.

War Games

The United States played at war last week. An "enemy" air fleet had suddenly overpowered American defenders of the tiny Pacific island of Midway and were moving on from the west to attack Hawaii. Could the Pacific fleet reach Honolulu in time and withstand the "surprise" attack? That was to be the test.

Usually such war games are nothing more than gigantic spectacles, reported in full detail by the press. But these maneuvers were treated differently. Complete secrecy was the order of the day, and news reporters and photographers were barred. In the attempt to make the games as realistic as possible, even the army was kept in the dark as to just what would happen. At the moment, the games are still going on. The "Battle of Honolulu" has not yet been fought. There have already been casualties, however, and not fake casualties either. Two destroyers collided just outside the harbor of Honolulu, with the result that a member of one of the crews was killed and several were injured. Another serious disaster occurred when one of the planes, sent out to ward off an "enemy" submarine attack, got caught in a fatal air current and plunged its pilot into the depths of the Pacific.

These grim maneuvers have won widespread criticism, both because they tend to promote the war spirit and because they invite the diplomatic hostility of the Japanese, who are said to look upon the games so close to their shores as an implied threat to their country.

"Movies"

A nation-wide movement is under way to make the movies a part

of the school program. Under the direction of the Committee on Social Values in Motion Pictures, a number of films have been prepared for school use. The striking feature about these "shorts" is that every one of them is an excerpt from a regular full-length picture, featuring the leading actors and actresses of the day. The educators believe that many children, seeing the full-length film, miss the point of certain scenes which are complete in themselves and which have a definite educational value. Examples of these excerpts are scenes which show such human experiences as the difficulty of a child trying to make his parents understand him and episodes illustrating truthfulness, courage, and other qualities.

New York City school children have already been shown the first of the series, which is a section from the picture "Sooky." After viewing the film, the children returned to their classrooms to discuss the problem which the picture presented. Other films to be used for the purpose include "Huckleberry Finn," "Skipper," "Wednesday's Child," and "Tom Sawyer."

How to Raise Money

For the first three years of the New Deal, Congress has appropriated as much money as the federal government spent in all the years from 1789 to 1913. By far the greatest part of this outlay went for relief, and if the government is to continue its program for the unemployed, taxation is sure to become an increasingly grave problem. With this in mind, many people are coming to the conclusion that the ideal method of replenishing the treasury is to impose higher inheritance taxes. By taxing the estates of the wealthy, they point out, we not only secure revenue but we help to break up the huge concentrations of wealth which have proved so harmful. Let us see just how much of the tax burden these estates carry at present.

If a man leaves an estate valued at \$10,000, he must pay a tax of \$100. A \$20,000 estate, however, is taxed, not \$200, as we might suppose, but \$300. Thus we see that as the value of the estate increases, the percentage of tax rises. When we arrive at an estate worth \$1,000,000, we find there is a tax of \$181,600. In other words, the rate instead of being one per cent, as it was for the \$10,000 estate, is now 18 per cent.

This may sound like an enormous tax, but after paying it the heir still has considerably more than \$800,000 left. If he merely puts this sum in a savings bank for safe-keeping, he can enjoy for the rest of his life, a weekly income of nearly \$500 from the interest alone, without ever touching the \$800,000. Defenders of the higher inheritance tax believe, therefore, that while a man should have the right to provide for his family after his death, the government can go much farther in cutting down the size of inheritances and still do nobody an injustice. There would be strong opposition to such a movement, of course, from those who believe that such a high tax is equivalent to confiscating

wealth. Such wealth, they argue, has been properly accumulated and it is the owner's privilege to dispose of it any way he sees fit.

Wheat Farmers to Vote

On May 25 the AAA will ask the wheat farmers of the Middle West if they want the 1934 crop-adjustment program continued for another four years. On that day the 575,000 farmers who agreed to reduce their crop last year will vote on the issue, along with any other wheat-growers who desire to express themselves on the subject. Similar votes have already been held among tobacco and cotton planters.

Secretary of Agriculture Wallace and Agricultural Administrator Davis assert that the referendum is being held simply to find out what the farmers want. Opponents of the AAA, on the other hand, maintain that the vote is a strategic political move, intended to influence Congress in its consideration of the AAA amendments. They say that the farmers are bound to vote in favor of the program simply because it means they will receive cash benefits. They point out that in the tobacco and cotton votes, the farmers who were not under agreement with the AAA voted overwhelmingly against the plan, thus showing, they argue, that the program helped only those who received the cash payments instead of benefiting agriculture as a whole.

Byrd's Gift to Science

Admiral Byrd is home from the Antarctic. Throngs greeted his arrival, and President Roosevelt himself was on the dock to welcome him home.

But despite the warm reception the explorer received, few people realized that the ship which brought him up the Potomac carried the most valuable cargo of scientific data ever brought to the United States. Here are a few of the results of Byrd's two-year stay at the bottom of the world: (1) 200,000 square miles of territory have been added to the United States and mapped with aerial cameras. (2) The first authentic measurements of the thickness of the polar ice cap were made. This is expected to be of great value in future studies of weather conditions throughout the world. (3) New knowledge was obtained of the plant and animal life of the antarctic. (4) New facts were discovered about cosmic rays (minute electrically charged particles which bombard the earth and which scientists now believe play a vital part in the physical structure of the world). (5) An intensive study was made of many other physical phenomena.



RICHARD E. BYRD

Metropolitan Tragedy

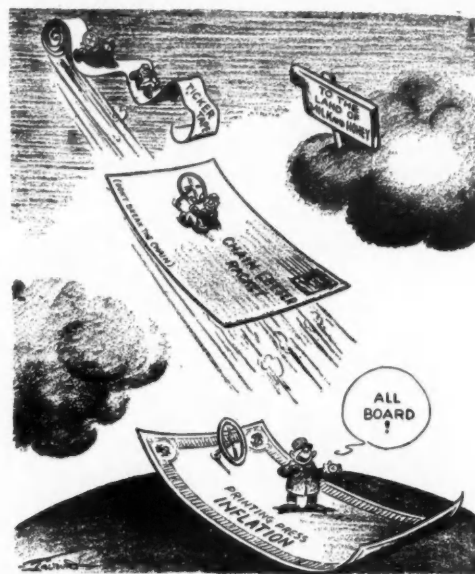
Only a few weeks ago Mr. Giulio Gatti-Casazza, director of New York's Metropolitan Opera House since 1908, retired and went back to his native Italy. The Metropolitan's board of directors elected as his successor Mr. Herbert Witherspoon, who had been with the company for many years. Last week, just as he was entering upon his new duties, Mr. Witherspoon dropped dead of a sudden heart attack. He was preparing to sail for Europe that very evening in search of new singers. The tragic loss of Mr. Witherspoon, a distinguished figure in the musical world, may greatly complicate matters for the Metropolitan, which has been having a hard struggle financially during the past few years.



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A TOWN RUN COMPLETELY BY ELECTRICITY

Mason City, Washington, where houses have been built for workers on the Grand Coulee Dam. There is not a smokestack in the town.



ANOTHER MAGIC CARPET

—Talbot in Washington News

THOUGHTS AND SMILES

Daylight saving to the contrary notwithstanding, all back-fence cat concerts during the summer season will continue to be conducted on eastern standard time.

—Philadelphia Evening Bulletin

The good generally displeases us when it is beyond our ken.

—Nietzsche

Music is the universal language and the only cure for war, says a musician. And jazz, of course, the war to end war.

—Rochester Democrat and Chronicle

Keep on plugging. Remember the first olive you succeed in fishing out of a bottle loosens up the others.

—Montreal Daily Star

Style is the dress of thoughts. Dispatch is the soul of business.

—Earl of Chesterfield

The President might have known that this would happen. Just as soon as the country begins to look a little better, the Republicans want it back.

—New Yorker

The Democrats are foxy. If their schemes don't work, Republicans will come back and have the mess to clean up.

—Richmond News-Leader

I shouldn't think women would want to resemble men, for the more we look at men, the less we want to look like them.

—Lady Astor

It now seems likely that Congress will have to do some of its own thinking—much as we may all regret it.

—Yakima Valley Review

Wiley Post has the right motto, anyway: "If at first you don't succeed, fly, fly, again."

—Helena (Mont.) Independent

We are one of those who believe that Huey would be all right in the long run, if he didn't hurry back.

—Boston Herald



—From Today

If the United States Senate bars personal attacks, some of the senators will have nothing to say.

—Indianapolis News

I moreover affirm that our wisdom itself, and wisest consultations, for the most part commit themselves to the conduct of chance.

—Montaigne

Maybe the "send-a-dime" letter scheme was originated by the same economist who figured that all the people can get rich by taxing the other fellow.

—Indianapolis News

AROUND THE WORLD

Poland: On May 12 Marshal Joseph Pilsudski, Poland's hero dictator, died of cancer. He was 67 years old but seemed considerably older because of the strain of work and worry. To his people he was the embodiment of Polish liberties, for it was he more than anyone else who had obtained the independence of Poland after the war. Nominally he has been war minister since 1926, but in actual fact the final decision in every important government act has rested with him.

Marshal Pilsudski was an aristocrat by birth, a descendant of Lithuanian princes. He was born just four years after the Poles had made their last violent stand against their Russian masters, and thus he grew up in an atmosphere of hatred for everything that smacked of czarism. He studied medicine at a Russian university, but was soon expelled for having joined a band of revolutionary students. Shortly afterwards, he was seized as a member of a group of conspirators that had planned to assassinate the czar. He himself was innocent but nevertheless had to go with the rest for five years of hard labor in Siberia. He returned more bitter than ever, resolved to drive Russia from Poland or at least to aid the Russian revolutionists in overthrowing the czar.

Eventually he was caught and thrown into a Warsaw dungeon from which no one had ever been known to escape alive. But Pilsudski raved and flung himself about, and the warders, believing him insane, sent him to a prison hospital, from which he contrived his get-away.

He organized a band of sharpshooters and during the war led 10,000 of them on the Austrian side against Russia. He demanded that the Germans declare Polish independence. They did so, but tried to exert such control over the new country that Pilsudski turned against them and was lodged in the fortress of Magdeburg.

In late years he has been a dictator of an unusual sort. Instead of giving orders he has simply watched other men carry on the business of government and has vetoed anything that displeased him. Polish foreign policy has been based upon his belief that it would be disastrous to antagonize either Germany or Russia. Europe wonders whether his death will affect that policy. It is believed in some quarters that Poland's long-standing friendship with France may deflect to some extent her more recent association with Germany.

While Pilsudski lay on his deathbed in the Belvedere Palace at Warsaw, Foreign Minister Pierre Laval of France was deeply engaged in diplomacy with Poland's minister, Joseph Beck. The Polish government was openly irritated at the recent Franco-Russian treaty (see last week's issue of THE AMERICAN OBSERVER, page 3), and Laval had stopped in at Warsaw to explain it. He pointed out that the pact meant exactly what it said, that it contained no secret clauses, called for no military alliance, and could in no way injure the 15-year-old defensive alliance between France and Poland.

U.S.S.R.: From Warsaw Laval went on to Moscow to call upon Stalin and Litvinoff. He was accorded a most enthusiastic reception, for although the recent Franco-Russian pact (calling for mutual aid in case of invasion) does not go as far as the Soviet government would have liked, it

does much to alleviate Russia's fear of a simultaneous invasion by Japan and Germany. Only last week Stalin explained that Russia's years of hunger, gigantic industrialization and militarization had been spurred on by her dread of an attack of this kind.

Since the Franco-Russian treaty has already been signed, Laval's visit was little more than a gesture of friendship, but two matters were discussed at some length: the possibility of Poland and Germany agreeing to an eastern nonaggression scheme, and the proposed Russo-Czech treaty of mutual assistance. It is believed that during Laval's visit to Warsaw he asked the Poles if they would agree to a general nonaggression treaty with voluntary mutual assistance pacts within its orbit. Poland is said to have agreed, and since Hitler himself proposed a treaty of that kind just before the Stresa Conference, it seems likely that something can be arranged. THE AMERICAN OBSERVER went to press before Hitler's long-heralded speech of May 17, however, so there is no way of knowing how far he is willing to go.

Eduard Benes, foreign minister of Czechoslovakia, purposes a visit to Moscow soon after Laval's departure. While he is there, it is probable that he and Litvinoff will sign a mutual assistance pact along the lines of the Franco-Russian agreement.

Abyssinia: This week the Council of the League of Nations is holding its regular May meeting. The delegates will gather around their U-shaped table delivering stiff speeches and reports that mean little or nothing to the crowds of people watching them practice "open diplomacy," but in their hotels and in Geneva's cafes, where the real work of diplomacy is carried on, one of the principal topics of conversation will be the threat of war between Italy and Abyssinia.

At first the Council tried its best to ignore the Abyssinian problem, which seemed just a persistent mosquito buzzing around the heads of the harassed diplomats engaged in the larger problem of European peace. But now the Abyssinian problem is directly affecting Europe. Mussolini has sent 150,000 men to his African colonies and France and England are beginning to feel that he is neglecting his duty of helping them to keep Germany under control. Besides that, they regard his African adventure as a

clear-cut case of imperialistic aggression, yet they know they cannot condemn it outright without antagonizing him and losing his support altogether.

It is a problem to puzzle the most hardened diplomat. The only thing to be done, apparently, is to reprove both Italy and Abyssinia for warlike preparations and to avoid committing themselves to one side or the other. The rainy season in Abyssinia makes war impossible for a few months. In the meantime the powers will hope that somehow the two countries will arrive at a peaceful settlement.

Italy: Mussolini continues to pave the way for next month's Rome Conference at which he hopes to induce all central European states to guarantee Austrian independence against Hitlerism. A recent meeting at Venice between diplomats of Austria, Hungary, and Italy, resulted in Hungary's tentatively agreeing to come to the Rome gathering without insisting upon an immediate revision of the Treaty of Trianon which deprived her of both arms and territory. In return Mussolini has promised to throw his influence behind the revisionist cause.

Mussolini himself did not attend the Venice conversations, but soon afterwards he had a private chat at Florence with Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg of Austria. For the most part they ignored the international situation and concentrated upon Austria's complicated domestic problems.

Two more meetings are to be held before the end of May. Foreign Minister Yefitich of Yugoslavia will stop at Venice on his way to the May meeting of the League Council, and soon afterwards Rumania and Czechoslovakia will send their foreign ministers for preparatory talks with Italy.

Balkan States: Soon after Austria and Hungary brought up the question of revising the peace treaties at Venice, foreign ministers of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Turkey, and Greece hurried off to Bucharest, Rumania, to decide what attitude they would take in the matter. After hours of discussion, they decided that since Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria had all begun to rearm in defiance of the peace treaties, there was little use in opposing them. In return for their sanction, however, they expect these three countries to join them in a nonaggression pact.

But if they accepted rearmament of Germany's former allies as an accomplished fact, the Balkan states voiced a unanimous NO to anything that savored of the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy. They were unalterably opposed to restoration of the Hapsburg dynasty and announced that under no circumstances would they consider returning any of the land that once belonged to Hungary.

South Africa: At the close of the war Germany's colonies in Africa, Togoland, Cameroons, Tanganyika, and Southwest Africa, were taken from her and handed over to French and British administrations as "mandates," or territories subject to some degree of League supervision. Political leaders of the Union of South Africa believe it is high time that



—Herblock in Elkhart, Indiana, TRUTH
THE YOUNGER GENERATION

some of these lands were returned to Germany. They point out that Germany was an exceptionally efficient colonial administrator and maintain that if she were given a colony or two to play with she might not blow off quite so much steam in Europe.

France and Britain have not taken kindly to the idea, for their mandates supply them with useful raw materials. But perhaps, if South Africa returns Southwest Africa, which she herself administers, the others may be induced to follow suit.

Something to Think About

1. How has the Supreme Court decision in the railway pension case cast a shadow of doubt on the constitutionality of other features of the New Deal, particularly the NRA and the social security program?
2. Why is the Patman bonus bill considered more dangerous than the expenditure involved?
3. Do you believe that the present system of permitting a simple majority of the members of the Supreme Court to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional is at all objectionable?
4. How is the death of Pilsudski likely to affect the European situation?
5. Point out the encouraging factors in the international situation. The unfavorable ones.
6. Do you think the last nine months represent a gain or a loss so far as prospects of maintaining peace are concerned?
7. Is there any similarity between American psychology at present and the German psychology in the days before Hitler came to power?
8. What is your opinion of the method of raising public revenue by high inheritance taxes?
9. In what way might the restoration of colonies to Germany contribute to European peace?
10. Do you consider the Hauptmann trial the most important development of the last nine months? Why or why not?

REFERENCES: (a) Political Maze. *Commonweal*, April 26, 1935, pp. 723-725. (b) Washington Tempo. *Current History*, May, 1935, pp. 148-151. (c) Congress Pauses to Take Stock of Spring Program. *Congressional Digest*, April, 1935, pp. 97-100. (d) What Will Europe Do? *Commonweal*, April 26, 1935, pp. 725-726. (e) Europe's Balance of Power. *New Republic*, April 17, 1935, pp. 281-283. (f) New Drama Preparing in East Asia. *Asia*, May, 1935, pp. 261-265.

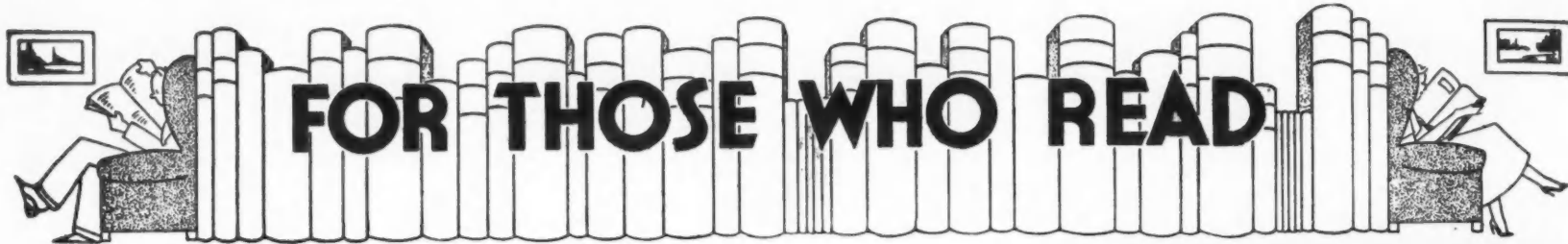
PRONUNCIATIONS: Pilsudski (peel-sood'-skee), Yefitich (yave'teech), Litvinoff (leet-vee'noff—o as in or), Magdeburg (mahg'de-boorg), Benes (ben-esh').



ENGLAND CELEBRATES

On May 6 festivities began throughout the British Empire to mark the 25th anniversary of King George's reign. A street in London dressed up for the occasion.

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Following is a list of some books which have appeared during the last year. They are recommended for summer reading.

Hobbies and Vocational Guidance

New Careers for Youth, by Walter B. Pitkin, New York: Simon and Schuster. \$1.50. Mr. Pitkin surveys the job field, and gives suggestions as to the best ones to enter.

Popular Crafts for Boys, by Edwin T. Hamilton, New York: Dodd, Mead. \$3. The author describes 14 popular crafts, from carpentry to soap sculpture.

Hobbies for Everybody, edited by Ruth Lampland, New York: Harpers. \$3. Fifty interesting hobbies are described and discussed.

The Book of Puppets, by Martha Munger and Annie Elder, New York: Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard. \$1.50. Six plays for puppets, with instructions on how to go about producing them.



ILLUSTRATION BY ANN BARRETO FOR "BRIGHT MEXICO."

The Girl and Her Job, by Esther E. Brooke, New York: D. Appleton-Century. \$1. Many sound suggestions on work for girls.

Finding a Job, by Roger Babson, New York: Revell. \$1.50. Helpful aids in the technique of successful job hunting.

How to Get a Job During the Depression, by W. C. Graham, New York: Association Press. \$1. Another helpful book on this subject.

Adventure and Exploration

Destination Unknown, by Fred Walker, Philadelphia: Lippincott. \$2.50. The author describes his vagabond adventures as a wanderer in Alaska, Mexico, South America, Nicaragua, and various other countries.

Unrolling the Map, by Leonard Outhwaite, New York: Reynal and Hitchcock. \$3.75. The story of exploration, from the earliest times down to the present day.

Canoeing with the Cree, by Arnold Severeid, New York: Macmillan. \$1.50. The author, a boy of 17, describes a 2,250-mile canoe trip from Minneapolis to Hudson Bay, which he made in company with another boy.

Riding the Mustang Trail, by Forrester Blake, New York: Scribners. \$2.50. The story of four men who drove a herd of wild mustangs through the West of today. Exciting and well told.

Sails over Ice, by Captain Bob Bartlett, New York: Scribners. \$2. The well-known explorer, who accompanied Admiral Peary on his voyage of discovery to the North Pole, describes nine of his voyages into the Arctic regions.

Pilgrims of the Wild, by Grey Owl, New York: Scribners. \$3.50. The author, part Indian, describes his experiences hunting, trapping, and exploring in the wilderness of the West.

Fang and Claw, by Frank Buck, with Ferrin Fraser, New York: Simon and Schuster. \$2.50. Frank Buck, the famous hunter of wild animals for circuses and collections tells here of some of his exciting adventures.

Travel and Foreign Countries

I Change Worlds, by Anna Louise Strong, New York: Henry Holt. \$3. Pic-

ture of Russia, by one who has taken an active part in the Soviets' struggle for success.

South of the Sun, by Russell Owen, New York: John Day. \$2.50. Author's experiences on the first Byrd Expedition to the Antarctic.

Young Mexico, by Anne Merriam Peck, New York: McBride. \$2.50. A fine story of young people in Mexico and the kind of life they lead.

Spanish Raggle Taggle, by Walter Starkie, New York: Dutton. \$3.50. Author's adventures in Spain.

Hasta la Vista, by Christopher Morley, New York: Doubleday, Doran. \$2. A collection of delightful notes on a journey to Peru.

Understand the Chinese, by William Martin, New York: Harpers. \$2.50. A study of Chinese life today.

Fatherland, by Karl Bilingier, New York: Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50. Gripping story of a young German Communist under the Nazi régime.

Bright Mexico, by Larry Barreto, New York: Farrar and Rinehart. \$2. An informal visit to Mexico. It gives a fine picture of the country.

Biography

R. E. Lee, by Douglas Freeman, New York: Scribners. \$7.50. This outstanding biography, in four volumes, won the Pulitzer prize for 1934.

Queen Victoria, by E. F. Benson, New York: Longmans, Green. \$3.50. A good picture of the queen and her long and prosperous reign.

Men of Turmoil, New York: Minton, Balch. \$3.75. Biographical notes on 37 of the most important men of today, including Roosevelt, Hitler, Gandhi, and Einstein.

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ILLUSTRATION FROM "THE GRASS GROWS GREEN" BY HORTENSE LION



LAFAYETTE AT MOUNT VERNON IN 1784

Illustration in "The Autobiography of George Washington." By Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum.

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The Alleged Great Aunt, by Henry Kitchell Webster, Janet Fairbank, and Margaret Ayer Barnes, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill. \$2. Whimsical, humorous, absorbing.

The Corpse in the Green Pajamas, by R. A. J. Wal-

ling, New York: Morrow Publishing Company. \$2. Sustains interest to the very finish.

Most Beautiful Lady, by Dorothea Brande, New York: Farrar and Rinehart. \$2. Good detective story with a real plot.

Foreign Relations

The Price of Peace, by Frank H. Simonds, New York: Harpers. \$3. Survey of problems which stand in the way of world peace today.

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Government and Economics

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Ourselves and the World—The Making of an American Citizen, by F. E. Lumley and Boyd H. Bode, New York: McGraw-Hill. \$3. An excellent explanation of our most important governmental and economic institutions.

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Roosevelt versus Recovery, by Ralph Robey, New York: Harpers. \$2. Criticism of the economic policies of the New Deal.

THE AMERICAN OBSERVER

A Weekly Review of Social Thought and Action

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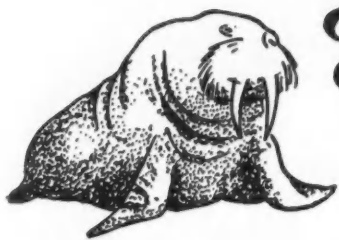
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The Walrus

"The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things: of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—of cabbages—and kings."

Student Aid—Many letters have come to THE AMERICAN OBSERVER asking how a student without money should go about it to secure aid in going to college. What opportunities are there for scholarships, fellowships, and part-time jobs? What colleges give most assistance of this kind? Fortunately there is an organization whose purpose it is to furnish such information. It is the Institute of Student Aid, and its address is Hartford, Connecticut. This organization publishes a monthly magazine during the school year. The name is *Student Aid*. This magazine is filled with valuable information. It tells of the funds which the various colleges and universities have at their disposal for the purpose of granting aid of all kinds to students. It also gives information about the courses which these universities give and the special work which they do. It should be invaluable to those who are anxious for expert help in deciding which college they should attend and how they might get financial assistance in going through school. Every teacher who wishes to be able to advise students on these important problems should be acquainted with this magazine. It would be well if it were in all school libraries so that students might consult it freely. The subscription price is \$5.00 a year or 50 cents for a single copy.

♦ ♦

Difficult Preliminaries—We hear quite a little about the slowness with which the government gets its building operations started. Money is appropriated for certain projects, housing for example, and yet months go by without any activity. It is commonly supposed that this is the result of inefficiency. The problem is not quite that simple, however. No doubt there is inefficiency in some cases, but it is hard for the outsider to realize how much preliminary work is necessary in order to start dirt to flying on a housing project. I was talking a few days ago with one of the authorities in charge of a housing project in a middle-western city. I was surprised to learn how much work was involved merely in making application for government money for such a project. In this city 300 men were kept busy for four weeks, preparing material to be used in making the application. Many investigations were necessary. These investigations determined such facts as the number of people now living in the area, the amount of rent they pay, the incomes of all the families, how much rent they might be able to pay, the financial position of all the properties, the amount of mortgages, and so on, together with other facts tending to show what the probable development of the city would be in this particular region. All sorts of problems, economic, social, and racial come up, and pertinent facts of this kind must be contained in the application for funds. It follows that much money must be spent merely in making application. In the particular case I am speaking about the money to be used for the preparation of the application was furnished by the FERA.

♦ ♦

Huey the Humorist—Huey Long has a sense of humor and also a sense of his own importance. He understands the news value of

anything with which his name is associated. Recently, it is said, he was lunching in the Senate Office Building restaurant with a fellow senator.

"Suppose," remarked Senator Long, "that a two-gun desperado were to walk in here now and fill you full of lead, what do you think would happen?"

"I've no idea," replied his companion, "What would happen?"

"All the newshounds in the country would be yelling 'EXTRA—Assassin's bullet misses Huey Long!'"

♦ ♦

Combating Propaganda—How can we combat the falsehoods and the propaganda spread through the press, the radio, and the movies? Some of these falsehoods appear in the advertising. Much of the propaganda is a matter of policy on the part of the owners of these agencies through the use of which opinions may be developed. Here are a few suggestions made by Edgar Dale and published by the Educational Research Bulletin of Ohio State University:

Is it not evident that we must develop standards which, through applying sound thinking to radio, press, and movie materials, will offer a certain degree of immunity to at least the more blatant and obnoxious forms of propaganda pouring from these sources?

Specific proposals for curriculum materials in this field are not difficult to state or develop. The teacher of economics, social studies, or home economics can begin tomorrow with an analysis of typical magazine and radio advertising. Is it educational? Does it appeal to fear or to a narrow spirit of competitive rivalry in display? What does *Consumers' Research* say about this particular product?

The class in dramatics or literature may wish to study the motion-picture reviews appearing in the daily newspapers. Are they "blurbs," or do they attempt to review critically significant phases of the motion picture? One teacher brought to class examples of reviews of both types and challenged her pupils to detect the "blurb" reviews from the critical ones.

In current events, studies can be made of the way that different newspapers present the same news. The pupils will quickly see that certain newspapers are constantly misrepresenting what happens and do considerable editorializing in their news columns. One college instructor reported to me that a large number of the members of his classes did not realize that the papers in that particular city could be easily classified on the basis of the interest groups and political parties whom they constantly favored.

The suggestion of the writer is simply that we teach high school students to use the scientific method of thinking in areas outside of science classes. Nothing would more quickly revolutionize the secondary-school curriculum and insure the development of an informed public opinion on matters relating to the welfare of the nation.

—The Walrus

World Keeps Peace in Troubled Months

(Concluded from page 1, column 1)

And there were rumors of war during the winter before the plebiscite which returned the Saar to Germany took place. There were fears that France and Germany would dispute so arrogantly over the vote that fighting might be the outcome. And later, in March, when Hitler proclaimed Germany's intention to disregard the rearmament prohibition in the Versailles Treaty there was more discussion of a Franco-German war. But nothing happened as the result of these events.

There were other dangerous incidents but we may skip over them. Enough has been said to show that, so far, crises have been surmounted and international peace has been kept. It is true, of course, that a similarity between this period and the one which preceded the World War may be pointed out. Then, as now, there were frequent developments which threatened to cause a large war but did not. Some observers believe that the world is definitely in a pre-war stage today just as it was in the years before 1914. Only tomorrow can tell us whether this is really the case. But for the present we know that the world has managed to survive manifold grave disturbances without resorting to war.

Germany Loses Friends

The second important fact which claims our attention concerns the political situation in Europe. Last September, in a review of the preceding summer's events, it was noted that Nazi Germany was losing the sympathy of other European countries, principally Italy and Great Britain. The drift away from Germany has continued during the fall, winter, and spring months. Hitler's arms proclamation in March, while in a sense a victory for him in that he went unpunished in his repudiation of the Versailles Treaty, so frightened Great Britain that she hastened to support France, Italy, and Russia in their determination to surround Germany with an iron ring of treaties calculated to keep her locked up within her own boundaries. For the present, at least, Britain is solidly opposed to Germany, a departure from her traditional middle-of-the-road policy. In addition, France and Russia have concluded an alliance to defend each other against Germany, and Russia and Czechoslovakia are said to have completed negotiations for a similar arrangement. This leaves Germany without a friend in Europe, with the possible exceptions of Poland and Hungary. And with the death of Poland's dictator Pilsudski it is not unlikely that Polish statesmen, feeling their nation's weakened position without Pilsudski's strong personality, will be inclined to glide back under the wing of France.

Whether such a trend of events can insure peace remains to be seen. Of course, as long as Germany is isolated there is

little danger of war. No nation enters a war unless it is reasonably confident of winning. But it is by no means certain that the nations will remain so unequally divided. If Germany succeeds in annexing Austria—her most cherished ambition—her increased size will make her appear more attractive to such nations as Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Poland. Under such conditions it is conceivable that the continent might become split between two fairly equal groups of powers. This is what happened before the war, and with disastrous consequences. Many observers, therefore, look with alarm on the current



ALEXANDER ASSASSINATED
The killing of the Yugoslav monarch in Marseilles was an outstanding event of the school year.

drift of things in Europe. They see the nations edging toward a dangerous state of affairs.

Arms Race

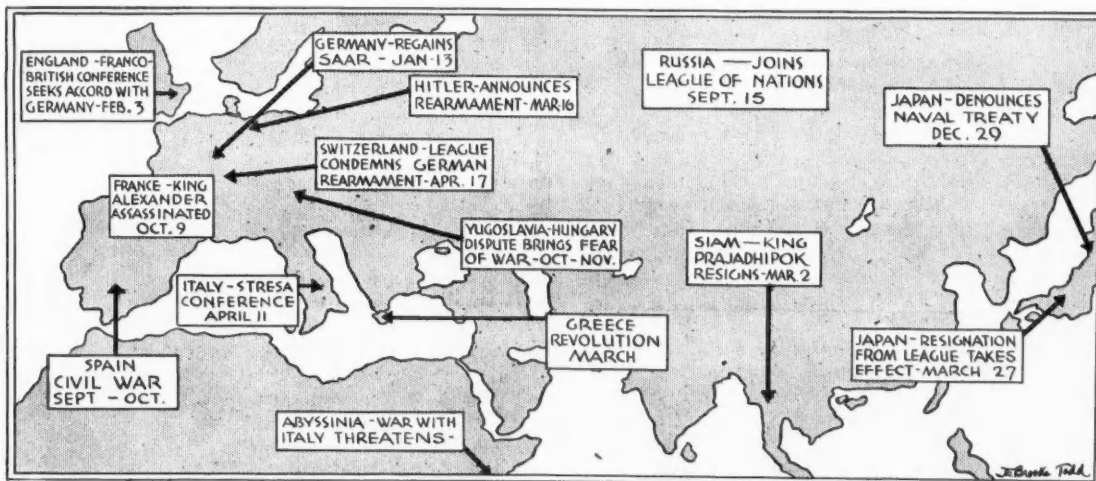
The third major factor in the international situation is likewise a gloomy one. The last nine months have seen the cessation of all disarmament talk. Instead, emphasis is being laid upon rearmament. Nations in all parts of the world are engaged in a mad race to outbuild each other in arms. England spends more money on munitions because Germany is rearming and Germany works night and day on her fighting equipment because England and France and Italy are armed. The United States spends millions on new battleships and sends its fleet to maneuver in the Pacific under the suspicious eyes of Japan. Arms races have always ended in war in the past and hence recent developments in that respect are not encouraging.

Number four in our list of facts is the continued strain in the relations between the United States and Japan. Last winter, Japan's insistence in London upon the right to a navy as large as those of the United States and Great Britain did not produce a good effect in this country. No agreement was possible in London and the conversations ended in Japan's giving the necessary two years' notice to cancel the existing naval ratios among the three countries. Another conference is scheduled for this year but no mention has been made of it as yet.

Besides this, there have been increasing complaints among American business men with regard to competition offered by Japanese goods. Likewise Japan has shut American and other foreign oil companies out of Manchoukuo. More and more it is becoming clear that the Japanese intend to dominate Far East markets. All this is displeasing to the United States which has steadfastly upheld equality of opportunity among all nations in the Far East.

Of course, it would be a mistake to claim too great a tension between the two countries. Disagreements between nations are frequent and sometimes longstanding. There does not seem to be any basis for the frequent talk of an impending war between the United States and Japan. The lack of cordiality across the Pacific is nothing more than an undercurrent at the present time and there is no reason for believing that it will prove more than this.

We may note, in concluding, a few other factors in the international situation. The nations are (Concl. on p. 6, col. 4)



—Drawn for THE AMERICAN OBSERVER

HIGHLIGHTS OF WORLD EVENTS DURING THE LAST NINE MONTHS

The New Deal Strikes Two Snags

(Concluded from page 1, column 4)

a majority of one. But in the railway pension case Justice Roberts went over to the conservatives and gave them a majority. The ground upon which this majority of five declared the railway pension act unconstitutional was such as to lead to the conclusion that if the same reasoning were applied to other New Deal measures many of these measures might be thrown out.

This decision involved the powers of Congress under the so-called commerce clause of the Constitution. Last year Congress passed a law requiring the railway companies to grant liberal pensions to employees who had reached the age of 65 years. There was a question at the time about the constitutionality of the act. Congress, of course, has the power to do only such things as the Constitution expressly authorizes it to do. It may, for example, lay and collect taxes, establish post offices and post roads, regulate commerce among the states and foreign nations, and so on. It may enact any law which may be said to be a reasonable regulation of commerce. The majority in Congress and the President thought that a law requiring railway companies, which carried on interstate commerce to pension their employees was a reasonable way of regulating interstate commerce. Accordingly, a law to this effect was passed.

It was charged, on the other hand, that an act of this kind did not really regulate commerce; that it was really a law to benefit railway workers, and that Congress had no right to do such a thing. The Supreme Court majority upheld this view. It said that for Congress to require rail-

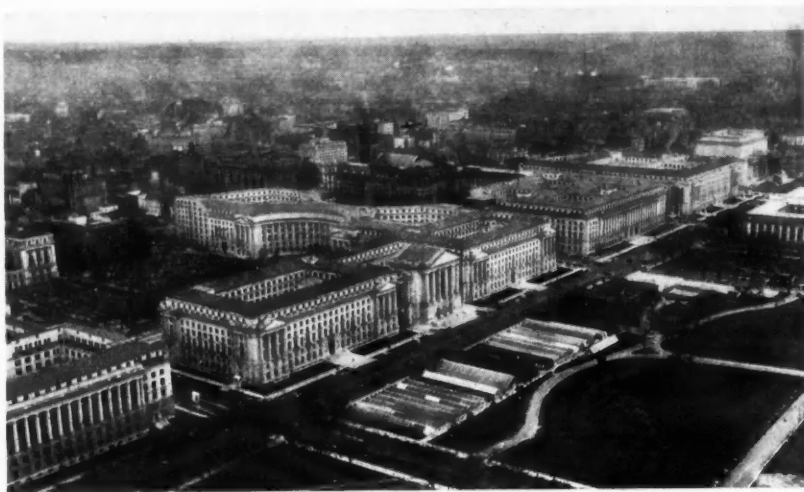


© Acme
PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT DELIVERS ONE OF HIS FAMOUS FIRESIDE RADIO CHATS

way companies to pension their employees was not a power which Congress possessed under the commerce clause. Such an act could not be interpreted as a regulation of commerce. Four of the justices, including the chief justice, Charles Evans Hughes, dissented from this view. The chief justice said that "industry should take care of its human wastage, whether that is due to accident or age." It is his contention that a law providing for the care of the human beings engaged in carrying goods from one state to another is a way of regulating commerce, just as much as a law would be if it regulated the manner by which the goods should be carried—just as much as if it regulated the rates which should be charged by the railroads.

Other Cases in Doubt

This decision threatens the constitutionality of the NRA. If it is to be upheld, it must be on grounds similar to those which the five members of the Supreme Court refused to sustain in the railway pension case. The codes, with their wage provisions, are constitutional only if it may be said that the fixing of wages for employees of companies doing an interstate business is a fair and reasonable way of regulating interstate commerce. The Supreme Court has held that the requiring of old-age pensions is not a reasonable way of regulating interstate commerce. A case involving a code which fixes wages and hours will soon come up. What will the majority of the Court say about the constitutionality of this code? The fate of all the codes and of the NRA itself hangs in the balance.



—Photo by Charles G. Mulligan
NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

This decision has also cast some doubt upon the constitutionality of the social security bill which is now before Congress. Would a majority of the Court hold it to be constitutional? This law, if enacted, would tax privately owned companies in order to create a fund out of which unemployment insurance benefits should be paid to workers when they were thrown out of their jobs. It is the belief of some that the Supreme Court will hold that Congress has no power to enact such legislation. This case, however, is quite different from the railway pension case and the case of the NRA. If the pension act and the NRA are constitutional it is because Congress has the right to regulate commerce and because this is a reasonable way of regulating commerce. The social security legislation, if enacted, will not be based upon the commerce clause. It will be based upon the power of Congress to levy taxes for the general welfare. The Constitution declares in Article 1, Section 8, paragraph 1, that "the Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States." A liberal judge would be inclined to grant Congress wide powers under this clause. If the judge were liberal enough he might sanction almost anything that Congress should do if Congress and the President were putting forth a law raising money for what they considered to be the general welfare. A conservative judge would be much more strict in his interpretation and would tend to place narrow limits upon the right of Congress to enact legislation for the general welfare.

The Shadow of the Court

The decision, when it comes, is likely to be a five to four decision. But whether the five will line up on the liberal side or the conservative is a question. So we see that the shadow of the Supreme Court is falling across the plans of the Roosevelt administration. If Justice Roberts should incline toward the conservative side, as he did in the last decision, the very heart may be taken out of the New Deal legislation. If, on the other hand, he turns back to the liberals, the New Deal will be saved so far as the Supreme Court is concerned.

Now that the Supreme Court is occupying such a pivotal position in a time of crisis, there is a revival of demands which have been heard from time to time throughout our history that the Court should be deprived of the power to declare unconstitutional an act which the Senate, the House, and the President believe to be constitutional. Less drastic are the demands that, while the Supreme Court might still retain the power to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional, such a decision should be binding only if it were made by a two-thirds vote of the Supreme Court justices. The movement for this change has not gained great headway yet, but more may be heard of it if the action of the Supreme

Court should upset a large part of the administration's program.

The other disquieting development is the enactment by the Senate and the House of the Patman bill. This bill provides that service men be paid at once in cash the full value of the compensation certificates. Full payment is not due until 1945, but the measure which has passed the two houses provides that it shall be paid now. The Patman bill, so called because it was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Patman (it is sponsored in the Senate by Senator Wheeler), provides that the money to pay this bonus to the ex-soldiers, amounting to about two billion dollars, be paid in greenbacks. The money is to be issued by the treasury. A compromise measure, the Vinson bill, provided merely that the money be paid by the treasury, but did not say how it should be raised. It might have been raised either by taxation or by borrowing. But the Vinson bill was defeated and the Patman bill passed both houses.

Roosevelt Opposes Bonus

President Roosevelt opposes the Patman measure, and before this paper reaches its readers he will probably have vetoed the act. There seems little doubt but that the veto will be overridden in the House by more than the required two-thirds vote. Whether or not the Senate will sustain the President's veto is undetermined.

Advocates of the bonus measure contend that it is an act of justice, that the men who served in the war deserve to be paid as much as the bonus will provide for them, and that this amount can be raised by the government without endangering the national finances. It is argued, also, that if the government distributes this money to the service men they will spend the greater part of it. This will stimulate business in much the same way that the works-relief program will.

Most of the opponents of the bonus agree that in justice the men who served the country in the war are entitled to substantial rewards, but they believe that the payment at this time would be dangerous. They are opposed in particular to payment by issuing paper money. This, it is contended, is inflation. It is very dangerous, so it is said, for a government to begin paying its expenses merely by putting the printing presses to work. If that is started it is likely to be continued, and it is inevitable that if the government keeps on printing money and distributing it to the people the value of each dollar of that money will decline. If the process is continued long enough the dollar will be practically worthless, as the German mark was in 1922 and 1923, during the days of the great German inflation. Such a development, of course, would mean absolute

financial ruin to a large part of the population. It would make insurance policies worthless. It would destroy the savings of all who have put money by for a rainy day.

The issuing of two billion dollars in paper money would not of itself result in wild inflation. It might, however, add to the fears which people already have of inflation. It might make them sufficiently afraid of the future of the dollar so that in great numbers they would start getting rid of their dollars by buying goods and property. This "flight from the dollar," this general spending spree, might cause prices to skyrocket, and that, of course, would be inflation. No one knows just how far a government can go in borrowing or in issuing paper money before the danger point will be reached, because no one knows just how the millions of the people will act under certain circumstances. No sane person will deny that there is some danger in any act which starts the printing presses putting out paper money to pay the government's bills. But the extent of the danger is a highly debatable question.

WORLD KEEPS PEACE

(Concluded from page 5, column 4)

suffering less from depression than they were some months ago. Improvements are observed in many countries. On the other hand, international trade, hampered by tariffs and quotas, has not revived as satisfactorily as might be hoped.

Such is the picture of the last nine months. What may be expected in the days just ahead of us? It would be unwise to make predictions, of course. However, at the present moment there is prospect of war between Italy and Abyssinia. Mussolini is apparently preparing to conquer the land of the Ethiopians just as the Japanese overcame Manchuria. But it will not be done so easily, for the Ethiopians are staunch fighters and are ready to resist to the full. Italy may be restrained by France and England, which are no longer remaining indifferent to Abyssinia's fate, but Il Duce does not seem to be in any mood to give up the adventure.

Last summer's events in Austria provided the most critical development of the vacation season. Austrian Nazis assassinated Chancellor Dollfuss and nearly succeeded in gaining control of the country, which would have meant an Austro-German union. Only the prompt mobilization of Italian troops along the Austrian border prevented this outcome. Since then the Austrian problem has lain uneasily across the path of Europe. Germany is unwilling to give up her claim to Austria and France and Italy are equally set against the union of the two German-speaking countries. Many consider Austria the foremost danger zone in Europe, and new and disturbing developments are feared.



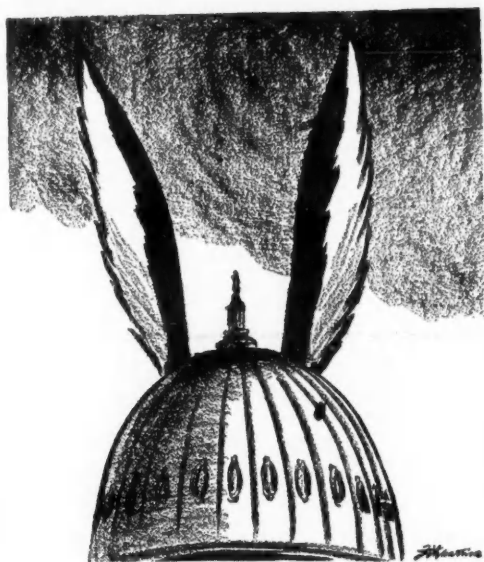
THE OL' GRAY MARE AIN'T WHAT SHE USED TO BE

—Evans in the Columbus DISPATCH

THE thirteenth installment of this feature. These three imaginary students have been meeting each week on this page to talk things over. The same characters are continued from week to week. We believe that readers of THE AMERICAN OBSERVER will find it interesting to follow these discussions week by week and thus to become acquainted with the three characters. Needless to say, the views expressed on this page are not to be taken as the opinions of the editors of THE AMERICAN OBSERVER.

Mary: Well, this has been quite an eventful year, hasn't it? I am thinking now of the months since we came together last September. It has been an interesting period in which to make a study of the news, both at home and abroad. So much has been happening.

Charles: What do you consider to be



—Fitzpatrick in St. Louis POST-DISPATCH
The Democratically controlled Congress in Washington is one of the chief sources of news interest.

the big news of the period—of the months since we came together last fall?

Mary: In order to answer that question we would have to make up our minds as to a definition of news, wouldn't we?

John: If the biggest piece of news is the thing which attracts the most attention and which occupies the most space in the newspapers, the answer to your question is easy. The big news of the year was the Hauptmann trial.

Charles: Well, I don't accept the emphasis which the newspapers give to things. The Hauptmann trial marked the final stages of a pitiful human tragedy. A baby was stolen and killed and this was the trial of the man supposed to have committed the crime. But thousands of tragedies occur every year. A thing like this has no great social significance. It doesn't deserve the newspaper space which it received.

Mary: Of course, one who wishes to understand human society and its problems can learn a great deal from the Hauptmann trial. He can learn a lot about mob psychology. He can see how easy it is for millions of people to get stirred up about a thing merely because newspapers are telling of it and because other people are talking about it. There were hundreds of other murders and murder trials this year and most of them were ignored, but persons affected by this tragedy were well known and popular. The case itself was quite dramatic and so it became a newspaper story, and when it did, people by the millions became more interested in it than they would in either their own private business or public events which vitally affect them.

Charles: There are interesting things to be learned by the case. I admit that. But as I see it, the most important news is news which deeply concerns our way of life.

John: From that standpoint, what is the most important thing that has happened since last fall?

Charles: Do you mean at home or throughout the world?

John: Either one.

Charles: Well, it is hard to say. I am inclined to think that so far as the United States is concerned the most important thing that has happened has been the adoption of President Roosevelt's works-re-

Talking Things Over

The Big News Stories of the Year. Which Were the Most Important? Which Are Likely to Have Most Permanent Significance?

lief program. It is a big thing for a government to decide to spend nearly five billion dollars to relieve distress, to put people to work, and if possible to get industries going in such a way that we will be pulled out of the depression. I don't know whether the plan will succeed or not, but as a vast experiment, it is a really big thing. The fact that there is doubt about the outcome makes it all the more interesting. It is a great venture by which more than a hundred million people undertake to look after the needy and to lift themselves out of a very dangerous situation.

Mary: I think I agree with you, but a number of other pieces of news have been very important. A number of other events would stand high on the list. I would suggest, for example, the election last November. It strengthened the hands of the administration and put the President in a position so that he could go ahead with his program. Whether that program is good or bad, it makes a great deal of difference to the country whether or not it is carried out.

John: Looking at it in that way, we will have to say that some of the Supreme Court decisions have given us really big news stories. The gold decision, for instance, was tremendously important. I don't like the decision, myself. I think, in the long run, it might have been better for the country if the decision had been otherwise. At least, I don't like the gold policy of the administration, but it makes a big difference whether that policy is sustained as constitutional by the courts or not, so the handing down of the gold decision was tremendously important.

Charles: The Supreme Court has been figuring more prominently in the news during the last few months than it has before for many years. Not only was the gold case important, but so are some of the other decisions the Court has handed down. About two weeks ago it rendered a decision declaring the railway pension act unconstitutional. That is a decision which will go down in history because it limited the power of Congress to act under the commerce clause. I think the decision is wrong, but it is very important because it will affect the action of the government in the future.

Mary: At any rate, we can say that the Supreme Court is doing very important things these days and is figuring very prominently in the news. After a while it will have the final word as to whether the NRA may continue its work.

John: Perhaps in the meantime Congress will speak the final word by refusing to continue the life of the NRA.

Mary: That is possible, but if it does decide that the NRA is going on, the Supreme Court may veto the decision by calling the act unconstitutional.

John: How do you rank the munitions investigation which has been carried on by a Senate committee?

Mary: If we couple that investigation with the efforts which are being made to take the profit out of war, I think we will have a very important development, one of the very most important of the year. If the plan to limit private incomes drastically in time of war is carried out, it is probable that we will not have any more wars. At least, peace advocates will find their cause greatly strengthened. If all wealthy men are made to understand that when war comes their incomes will be cut to \$10,000 a year, they will hesitate a long time before they will use their influence to get us into a war. If they actively use their influence to keep us out of war, the

chances are we will never go into a war.

Charles: I am quite skeptical about the adoption of that program, but I agree that the munitions investigation and the effort to stop war profits are important developments.

Mary: Among all the news stories of the year, I rate the dust storms quite highly. A large area is affected; thousands of people are being driven from their homes by this great national disaster; millions of others are being injured by the settling of the dust. Not only that, but these dust storms may indicate that a large territory which has been uninhabited and uncultivated will revert to desert. Many people believe that such a thing is happening. The storms are important also in that they call attention to the soil erosion problem.

John: These things which we have been talking about are really important, but we overlook one news story which occupied a tremendous amount of space. That is the Morro Castle disaster. I should say that it has considerable significance too, for it raised the question of safety at sea. Perhaps something will be done to bring about more effective rules regarding the safety of vessels.

Mary: We have been talking thus far about events and developments in the United States, but perhaps the biggest events of all have occurred in the field of international relations.

Charles: What are you thinking about in particular?

Mary: The central event, in my opinion, was Hitler's scrapping of the Versailles Treaty—his announcement that Germany would go ahead and arm in spite of the treaties. That act was a significant development in international affairs. It led to a closer union among the anti-German powers—France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy. The formation or strengthening of this alignment is a development which will occupy considerable space in the histories about world politics.

Charles: Of course, that process of lining up had been going on for a long time. Germany's act in scrapping the treaty hastened it, of course. Another step in the aligning of the nations was Russia's joining the League of Nations. That happened just as schools were opening last September and it was an event of very great significance. It was apparent then that Russia, fearing a war both in Europe and in the Far East, had decided to line up definitely with the anti-German powers. Then if Japan should attack her, there would be less danger that Germany could strike at her on the western front. She could not then be attacked in the rear while she was fighting Japan in the East. Since then Russia has become less aggressive in the East and is turning her attention to the job of thwarting the Germans who, under Hitler, have plans up their sleeves for expansion at the expense of

Russia. This lining up of Russia with the anti-German powers is a development of first-rate importance.

Mary: In the field of world affairs, we have also witnessed a number of dramatic incidents. Among them should be mentioned the crushing of the Spanish revolution, the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia, the mobilizing of Italian troops against Abyssinia, and just lately we have been reading about a dramatic event in England, that is, the celebration of the Silver Jubilee, the 25th anniversary of the reign of King George V.

John: And, of course, while all these things were happening and were getting into the papers, the government of every nation has been working away at the same job the government of the United States has had to deal with. All the governments have been trying to lift their people out of depression and to get upon the road toward recovery. We haven't had very much "news" about these developments. We haven't read of any concrete and definite acts or events, but just the same the big fact in the life of all the peoples of the world has continued to be the depression and the efforts to get out of it.

Mary: It would be a good thing if the papers would tell us more about the less spectacular but more important work which is being done by the people of every country—if they would tell us less of diplomatic events and more about the way the people are meeting their economic and social problems.

Charles: For these more important developments, of course, we must depend chiefly upon books and magazines rather than the daily newspapers.

Announcement

This is the last number of The American Observer covered by the school year or second semester subscriptions. The paper is published, however, throughout the calendar year. The subscription price for June, July, and August is 50 cents for a single copy, payable in advance. We invite students and teachers who have been using the paper in class during the school year to send in summer subscriptions to go to their home addresses. We hope that many of our readers will use our paper as a means whereby they will keep abreast of the times during the vacation period.

Last summer events and developments of great importance occurred both in this country and in foreign lands. Those who missed these summer developments were necessarily much behind the times when they returned for school work in the fall. There is reason to believe that the coming summer will be equally eventful. It is desirable that those who wish to be well informed should maintain the continuity of their study of public affairs. We hope that The American Observer may help you to maintain that continuity. Those who have subscribed for the calendar year will, of course, continue to receive The American Observer, and the paper will be offered, as usual, to the schools in September. It may be used by summer schools during the summer months at the club rate of three cents per copy per week.



AN APPROACHING DUST STORM

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IT IS ironical that the outstanding political development of the period following the war that was to "save the world for democracy" has been the suspension of democracy in a large part of the world. Many of the pre-war monarchies, it is true, have fallen, apparently forever. But in their stead have risen autocratic governments more ruthless in their tactics and more brutal in their suppression of the rights for which democracy has stood. So general has the movement away from traditional democracy been that one wonders today whether the few remaining countries with representative governments may not eventually follow the example set by the nations which are today living under dictatorships of one form or another.

Growth of dictatorship after the World War

It is not at all improbable that the most vital issue with which the American people will be confronted during the next generation will be that of preserving the democratic forms of government which were handed down by the Founding Fathers. Ominous signs already appear on the horizon. Already one state of the Union is under the iron thumb of a dictator. In a number of other places those civil liberties which were guaranteed to the American people by the first 10 amendments to the Constitution are being seriously menaced. And, on the broader national scale, one hears warnings from responsible individuals that the United States cannot escape the fate of the dictatorship nations unless it finds a solution to the acute economic problems which continue to undermine our national progress. Thus, it is important to examine as carefully as possible the forces which are today at work, threatening the very foundations of our political organization.

THROUGHOUT the world, the process of granting to the executive branch of the government greater powers, already present before the depression, has been accelerated during the period of economic crisis. As the weight of economic forces has borne more heavily upon the peoples of the world, they have turned to government for help. In most cases, the particular branch of government resorted to has been the executive. Legislatures have either abdicated altogether or they have handed over to the executive certain of their powers. In the former case, dictatorship has been the result; in the latter, different forms of what Professor Lindsay Rogers calls "crisis government," or an arrangement whereby power is lodged in the hands of the executive for the duration of the national crisis.

Crisis government supplants traditional practice

We have witnessed this phenomenon in our own country during the last two years. The special session of Congress, called by President Roosevelt to deal with the banking crisis of March, 1933, passed bill after bill which centered authority in the hands of the President. Through the regular session of last year and the present session, Congress has taken similar action, the latest example being the works-relief bill which gives the President practically a free hand to spend almost five billion dollars as he sees fit. It cannot be denied, therefore, that the United States has seen a great transformation in the processes of government during the last two years.

All this does not mean that this country has abandoned democracy, or that democracy is even threatened by a continuation of the trend

The Challenge to Democracy in America

By David S. Muzzey and Paul D. Miller

of the last two years. Congress still enjoys its constitutional prerogatives and could at any time thwart the President in his recovery program.

AND yet, there is danger that the United States may sooner or later drift into a situation akin to that which prevails in certain nations of Europe today, notably Germany and Italy. The particular economic and political set-up in those countries is called fascism, a generally misunderstood and misinterpreted term. Fascism is more than the suppression of civil liberties—freedom of thought and expression. It is more than the use of force against those who attempt to oppose the government. It is a system which fails to assume identical forms in all countries. But it does have certain common characteristics wherever it has been adopted. One of the first and most conspicuous characteristics is the abrogation of democratic practices.

Conditions incident to the establishment of fascism

Mr. Raymond Gram Swing, who, as a foreign correspondent for 20 years, had numerous opportunities to see at first hand the working of the fascist technique, declares in his recently published "Forerunners of American Fascism" that the four conditions which have brought fascism have been: the impoverishment of the middle class; the slowing down of business, causing unemployment on a large scale; the paralysis of democratic government; and the threat of a strong communist movement. In his examination of the present American scene, Mr. Swing finds two, and probably three, of these conditions present. There can be no doubt of the slowing down of business with its attendant unemployment. Nor is there any question of the impoverishment of the middle class, the small business men, the shopkeepers, the professional people. As to the paralysis of democratic government, Mr. Swing says, "I think it is fair to call the delegation of power to the President by Congress a breakdown of democratic machinery, and certainly it is not any longer the pure political democracy that it was."

It is important to examine the economic as well as the political aspects of fascism, if one would attempt to weigh the possibilities of fascism in this country. Unlike the extreme radical parties, which attempt to do away with capitalism and introduce a system of production for use without profits, fascism seeks no fundamental reorganization of our economic system. It does not attempt to transfer economic and political power to a different class of the population, as the French and Russian revolutions did. Industry in Italy, after a dozen years of fascism, is still privately owned, just as it was before the march on Rome. Nor has a change in the ownership of the instruments of production occurred in Germany since Hitler assumed control. According to Mr. Swing's definition, fascism is "a reorganization of society to maintain an unequal distribution of economic power by undemocratic means." When that "unequal distribution of economic power" is threatened by a radical movement; a movement which seeks to unhorse those in power, fascism generally marches on the scene and sup-

presses that movement by the denial of democratic rights and by the use of violence.

FASCISM does not come because a majority of the people want it or know they are working for it. It is extremely unlikely that the German people knew what they were in for when they fell in with Hitler; nor the Italians when they became supporters of Mussolini. Both of these dictators led what might be called "radical" movements. They promised to help the common man, to create conditions of justice for the masses, to reshape the economic organization of their countries so that wealth would be more equitably distributed. Mussolini catered to the working classes, promising them all sorts of things. Hitler promised to abolish many of the abuses of capitalism in Germany. And yet, neither of them did anything fundamentally to reshape the economic system.

People generally unaware of fascist possibilities

Wherever fascism has been established, it has come through the work of demagogues, those who promised the people far-reaching changes which would bring better conditions to them. It is doubtful if there has ever been a greater demagogue in the history of man than Adolf Hitler. If there is danger of fascism in the United States, it is possible that it will come from just such a source. The tactics of some of the demagogues now holding forth in this country are too similar to those of European fascist dictators to be ignored by thoughtful citizens. Mr. Swing expresses the belief that, "If economic equality cannot be achieved by democratic means, the inequalities of the system create a tremendous pressure upon unhappy people, and there comes demand for change. First of all, millions of people will cry for the impossible. They did it in Germany. They already are doing it here. Twenty-five million names are said to have been signed to petitions for the Townsend plan. Millions of people have joined Huey Long's Share Our Wealth societies, not only in Louisiana and Mississippi, but throughout the country. Further millions hear and heed Father Coughlin. Public feeling is beginning to boil up, as people lose hope in the present system. And when old Doctor Townsend and Huey Long tell them they can have everything that the human heart can wish, they are eager to believe."

WHAT the outcome of the present unrest and demand for change will be can only be told by the next five or 10 or 20 years. Practically everything will hinge on recovery. If economic conditions improve, if the millions out of work return to their jobs, if a sense of security returns to the majority of Americans, the danger of the establishment of an autocratic government will doubtless pass. If, on the other hand, our economic machine continues to creak along, there is no reason to believe that the American people will be wiser or more far-sighted than the Germans or the Italians. They will insist upon drastic change. They will follow those who promise them the most, however impossible those promises may be. And they will think they are getting a new economic order when, unless history completely reverses itself, they will be getting the old order with no chance of changing it, since they will have relinquished their most valuable weapon, the right to govern themselves, to change the economic order through the democratic process.

Future will hinge on economic recovery

Glimpses of the Past

Twenty-five Years Ago This Week

The funeral of King Edward VII is reported as one of the most moving pageants in the history of England. Nine monarchs, including the kaiser, who is a cousin of the late king, took part in the solemn procession. Queen Alexandra is bitter toward two of the country's leading statesmen, Lloyd George and Asquith, whom she holds responsible for the political worry which she believes caused the king's death.

A new cabinet department, to be headed by a secretary of public health, is being considered by Congress. There is considerable opposition to the proposal but defenders of the measure say that the opposition is being staged by makers of patent medicines who are afraid they will be put out of business by a stricter regulation of medical affairs.

A Frenchman, Comte Jacques de Lesseps, just flew over the English Channel in an airplane. This is only the second time the feat has been accomplished, Louis Bleriot having made the 20-mile flight last year. De Lesseps had nothing to guide him but the feeble rays of the sun through the dense fog. He flew rather high to avoid hitting the chalk cliffs of Dover.

Theodore Roosevelt is coming in for some strong criticism in England, where the Humanitarian League condemned his hunting expedition as "senseless lust for slaughter."

The long-awaited Halley's comet, which astronomers predicted for this week, put in its appearance on scheduled time. It is causing intense excitement and will be visible for some time to come.

Science is very skeptical about the value of pasteurizing milk. The Harvard Medical school has just advised the Massachusetts legislature against the process, saying that it is harmful. One of the chemists even went so far as to say that natural milk that is three days old is safer than two-day-old Pasteurized milk.

There is talk in Europe of a peace league to prevent further wars. The kaiser, it is said, is eager to lead the movement.

The French submarine Pluviose sank to the bottom of the English Channel with its crew of 27. This is the fifth major submarine disaster for the French within the past few years.